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VOLUME 141

Mauritania

Simonetta Calderini
Delia Cortese
James L. A. Webb, Jr.

Compilers

CLIO PRESS
OXFORD, ENGLAND · SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA
DENVER, COLORADO

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Mauritania. – (World Bibliographical Series)
I. Calderini, Simonetta II. Series
016.9661

ISBN 1–85109–152–1

Clio Press Ltd.,
55 St. Thomas' Street,
Oxford OX1 1JG, England.

ABC-CLIO,
130 Cremona Drive,
Santa Barbara,
CA 93117, USA.

Designed by Bernard Crossland.
Typeset by Columns Design and Production Services Ltd, Reading, England.
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Billing and Sons Ltd., Worcester.

DT
554.22016.9661
C35C127m
1992
Africa

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Introduction

This selective bibliography is a guide for the non-specialist to the literature on Mauritania. It contains annotated entries on articles and books ranging across the disciplines. It is our hope that this bibliography will prove particularly useful for undergraduate and post-graduate students and for government and private sector personnel who have professional reasons to be concerned with Mauritania.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is one of the largest and least known countries on the African continent. It is a region of more than one million square kilometres, roughly the size of Alaska or more than four times the size of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The northern region of Mauritania is one of Saharan plains, which flow across the frontier regions into Morocco, Algeria, and the disputed territory of the Western Sahara. To the west is a lengthy Atlantic coastline, off which some of the most copiously endowed fishing lanes in the world lie. To the east the Mauritanian desert blends into the emptiness of the Algerian and Malian Sahara. The Senegal river forms the southwestern and southcentral boundary, and in the southeast, Mauritania shares a border with Mali.

Three rather distinct ecological zones are found within the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. The Sahara desert dominates the northern four-fifths of the country. Human population densities are low across these arid expanses, except in the oasis settlements in the Adrar and the Tagant regions of central and southcentral Mauritania, respectively. Surrounding the oasis settlements, livelihoods are won from mixed camel and ruminant herding. In the lower fifth of the country, the desert merges with the *sahel* or borderlands of the desert. Here, at the isohyetal line indicating approximately 200 millimetres of rainfall, desert-edge grasses make cattle herding possible. Rainfed agriculture in the southern sahel is also practised during years of adequate precipitation. Even farther to the south, the sahel blends

405 **Orientation bibliographique sur la Mauritanie.** (Bibliographic survey of Mauritania.)
Charles Toupet. *Bulletin de l'Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire*, series B, vol. 21 (1959), p. 201–39; vol. 24 (1963), p. 594–613.

An excellent bibliography, now somewhat dated, that contains sections on general works, scientific missions, geography, archaeology, history, Islam, linguistics, art and technology, economics, literature, bibliographic notes, and West African studies. See also B. Blaudin de Thé, *Essai de bibliographie du Sahara française et des régions avoisinantes* (Paris, 1960).

The Wolof of Senegambia, together with notes on the Lebu and the Serer.
See item no. 183.

Women of Northern, Western and Central Africa. A bibliography 1976–1985.
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African trade unionism: a bibliography with a guide to trade union organizations and publications.
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Libraries in West Africa: a bibliography.
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Mauritanie: organisation de la bibliothèque nationale de Mauritanie. Nouakchott. (Mauritania: the organization of the national library of Mauritania. Nouakchott.)
See item no. 386.

The Arab world: libraries and librarianship 1960–1976. A bibliography.
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